

VZCZCXRO8388
OO RUEHBBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHNEH RUEHPW
DE RUEHNE #1129/01 1531437
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 021437Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6815
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 7722
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 1372
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 6466
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 3462
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1774
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 8369
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 8116
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 001129

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [ENRG](#) [CE](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: CHARGE MEETS NEW INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER;
BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY

Classified By: CDA Peter Burleigh. Reasons: 1.4(B, D).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a June 2 courtesy call by the Charge, newly appointed External Affairs Minister Krishna said he welcomed enhancement of the bilateral dialogue. In a prior meeting with Foreign Secretary Menon, the Charge flagged the need to move forward on "legacy" issues in the run-up to next week's visit by Under Secretary Burns. Menon said he would soon share information on India's review of various bilateral dialogues and looked for progress on military-to-military agreements and civil nuclear implementation. The Charge urged that visas be issued to a delegation from the Commission on International Religious Freedom. End Summary.

Meet the New Foreign Minister

¶2. (SBU) In a twenty-minute courtesy call June 2 on new Indian External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna, the Charge underlined the importance of moving ahead in the bilateral relationship, as reflected by the Secretary in her telephone conversation with Krishna on May 29. Krishna assured the Charge that he welcomed the expanding scope of the relationship. While there had been a change in the Ministry, there would be no change in the support of the UPA government for strong ties to the United States, he said.

¶3. (C) The Charge flagged the upcoming visit of Under Secretary Burns as an opportunity to resolve lingering bilateral issues while laying the groundwork for an enhanced strategic dialogue with India. Noting that Krishna had himself been a Fulbright scholar in the U.S. in the sixties, the Charge said that educational cooperation would be one of the likely topics of bilateral talks. Krishna said he looked forward to reviewing proposals to bolster dialogue with India and wanted a road map for forward progress. He said India would be happy to receive the Secretary this summer and said he would like to visit the United States early on, but this would not be likely before fall. (Bio Note: In an aside, Krishna mentioned the warm feelings he had for the U.S. from his studies at Southern Methodist University and George Washington University. He noted that he had met Senator Fulbright and had been able to hear Martin Luther King preach in Montgomery, Alabama during his stay in the United States. End note).

Menon: Bilateral Architecture

14. (C) In a prior meeting on June 2 with Foreign Secretary Menon, the Charge informed Menon that the U.S. was currently reviewing the various bilateral dialogues with India to see whether discussions could be enhanced and the structure of talks made more useful. Menon acknowledged the GOI was going through a similar process and that the intent was to revise, reduce and "evolve" the sets of dialogues to make the entire structure more rational. While this process had begun some time ago, it could not be completed until a new government was in office in India and the various stakeholders in the Indian bureaucracy had been satisfied. This was moving forward and Menon hoped to be able to share the results when Under Secretary Burns visited next week, if not before. India viewed the dialogues as falling into two basic categories -- political/military/security and economic. New Delhi was leaning towards having an overarching dialogue at the Ministerial-level to track progress and encourage forward movement.

Menon: Mil-Mil Relationship

15. (C) Menon acknowledged that India was reviewing its position on End Use Monitoring. He said that final approval of the Logistics Support Agreement may come relatively soon, but that an agreement on interoperability of equipment was under review by the Ministry of Defense. Menon said that the

NEW DELHI 00001129 002 OF 002

GOI aimed at completing agreements in these areas by or before the time that the Secretary of State might visit. He understood the need to clean up "legacy" issues from the prior administration to allow time for the Secretary to launch a new dialogue with India.

Civil Nuclear/Non-Pro: Pending

16. (C) Menon said the GOI hoped to move forward with the selection of sites for possible U.S.-built nuclear power plants in time for Under Secretary Burns' visit. He said a response was pending to a U.S. demarche asking for assurances from the India Department of Atomic Energy as part of the U.S. Department of Energy Part 810 authorization/license process; Menon thought India's answer would be positive.

Sri Lanka: Delegation Coming Next Week

17. (C) Responding to the Ambassador's query about whether the Sri Lankan government was being responsive to demands from the international community to provide access to internally displaced persons, Menon said the Lankans were doing just enough to keep the Indians satisfied for now. On-the-ground cooperation with Indian relief providers was good, but he was unable to make any judgment about what the mid- to long-term prospects were for treatment of IDPs or on political devolution. The Sri Lankan President's Senior Advisor Basil Rajapaksa as well as Secretary of Defense Gothabaya Rajapaksa were now slated to come to New Delhi for talks next week, but a time for these discussions had not yet been nailed down. He underscored that the GOI was interested in hearing Sri Lankan plans both with regard to Tamil IDPs and regarding political negotiations. He hoped that the GSL was not aiming for quick elections in the north to establish an unrepresentative provincial government, as had been done in the Easter Province earlier. Menon speculated that after the visit, the GOI should have a better feel for GSL intentions.

Commission on International Religious Freedom

18. (C) The Charge reviewed the role of CIRF and noted that we had encouraged the Committee members to visit India and talk to the government and various affected communities before issuing a report on religious freedom in India. However, the delegation was having trouble getting visas for their visit. The Charge encouraged the GOI to issue visas expeditiously to the CIRF delegation because a visit presented India with an opportunity to let the members see for themselves what the situation was on the ground and meet stakeholders. Menon was not encouraging about arranging meetings with government officials, pointing out the political and social sensitivity of anything touching on religion in India and noting official concerns about the appearance of a foreign government body evaluating Indian behavior. "That's a hard sell for the Ministry to make," Menon added, and while India acknowledged it had serious social problems, as a strong and vibrant democracy, it was committed to solving these issues itself.

BURLEIGH